

A Comanche Village by George Catlin; The Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.

A Village Scene shows Comanche women curing buffalo hides. In the background, meat is drying in the sun. The Indians used buffalo skins for many purposes. They made clothes from them and stretched them over poles to form teepees. It took from 15 to 30 buffalo hides to make a teepee cover.

Shelter. Indians built many kinds of homes because they lived in different climates and had different building materials. Those who moved about a great deal had simple shelters they could carry easily, or they built temporary shelters. Indians who stayed in one place built larger, more permanent homes. Some groups, such as the Haida, built large houses where many families lived together. Others, including the Pomo of California, had simple huts that housed only a few persons.

Many Indians built a pole framework and covered it with leaves or bark, like the dome-shaped *wigwam* of the Eastern Woodlands (see *WIGWAM*). The Iroquois followed a similar method in building their large, rectangular *long houses*. Some of these houses were 100 feet (30 meters) long. The Apache and Paiute used brush and matting to make simple huts called *wickiups*. Some North American tribes made *earth lodges*. They built their houses in pits and roofed the structures with sod. Poles or logs covered with earth formed the Navajo *hogan* (see *HOGAN*). The Plains Indians built cone-shaped *teepees* of buffalo skins (see *TEEP*). In other areas, the Indians covered their teepees with animal skins or with tree bark. Indians at the southern tip of South America also used skins to cover their *wind-breaks*. The Cliff Dwellers and other Pueblo Indians used *adobe* (sun-dried bricks) to make many-storied "apartment houses." Indians in Mexico and in the Andes Mountains of South America also used adobe.

Hunting and Fishing. Most Indians hunted and fished for food. But they hunted some birds only for their feathers, and they prized some animals, such as the beaver and vicuña, for their fur.

The most important game animals of North and South America included deer; rabbits and other small game; birds such as ducks, geese, and herons; sea mammals such as seals, sea lions, and whales; turtles; and snakes. Bear, buffalo, caribou, elk, and moose lived only in North America. Animals which were hunted mainly in South America included the guanaco, jaguar, peccary, rhea, and tapir.

Indians hunted with the same kinds of weapons they used in war. Many bows and arrows, spears, and clubs had special features for hunting. For example, some Indians used unsharpened arrows to shoot birds in trees. These arrows stunned the birds so that they fell to the ground. The Hopi stunned small game with a kind of boomerang.

The Indians caught fish with harpoons, hooks and lines, spears, and traps and nets. Tribes of the Northwest Coast also used long poles called *herring rakes*. These poles had jagged points and could catch a number of herring at one time. Indians of tropical South America shot fish with bows and arrows from sand bars in rivers. Both North and South American Indians used drugs to catch fish. In one method, the fishermen chopped up certain plants and threw them in

INDIAN, AMERICAN / Warfare

Wars occurred frequently and had an important role among some tribes of the Americas. But not all tribes took part in warfare. Many tribes opposed fighting, and others were so poor that they had to spend all their time searching for food.

Many of the Indian chiefs who tried to halt the advance of the white man became famous warriors. They included King Philip, a Wampanoag; Pontiac, an Ottawa; Tecumseh, a Shawnee; Sitting Bull, a Teton Sioux; Crazy Horse, an Ogalala Sioux; and Cochise and Geronimo, Apache warriors.

Weapons. The bow and arrow was probably the most common Indian weapon throughout North and South America. Some South American tribes put poison on their arrowheads. Many Indians fought with spears and clubs. The Indians of eastern North America developed a special type of club into the tomahawk (see TOMAHAWK). The Aztec made a vicious weapon by sticking pieces of *obsidian* (volcanic glass) in a wooden club. South American Indians used blowguns and slings.

Why the Indians Fought. Warfare was usually the only way of settling disputes between tribes. A council, made up of the chiefs of tribes that had joined together, settled many arguments that arose between tribes. But warfare might result if the council could not settle a dispute.

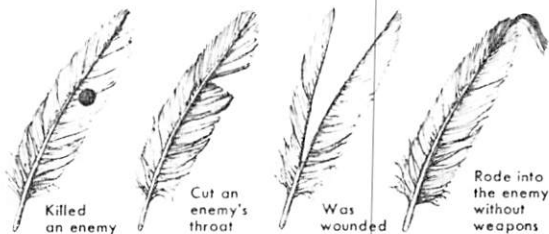
Warfare gave an Indian a chance to achieve high rank in his tribe. On the Plains, it was considered braver to touch a live enemy and get away than to kill him. This act was called *counting coup*. Warriors carried a *coup stick* into battle and tried to touch an enemy with it. If successful, they later bragged about their bravery at a victory celebration. Warriors who counted coup wore eagle feathers as signs of their courage.

The scalp of an enemy was a war trophy in parts of North America. In the Northwest, warriors cut off whole heads as trophies. The Europeans encouraged scalp hunting in North America by paying friendly Indians for the scalps of enemies. The Caribbean and Tropical Forest Indians fought for war honors and trophies that included skulls and shrunken heads as well as scalps.

The Aztec fought not only to enlarge their territory, but also to take captives for sacrifice to the gods. Human sacrifice was an important part of the Aztec religion. Only the Aztec and the Inca had full-time armies. In other tribes, the warriors went back to hunting or farming after their battles.

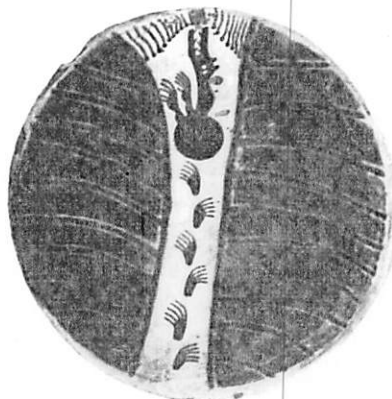
Some tribes, particularly the Northwest tribes and the Iroquois, made slaves of their captives. The Witoto and Tupinambá tribes of the Tropical Forest tortured their war captives and then ate them. But the victims were not eaten as a source of food. The Indians believed that the dead man's strength and bravery would be passed on to the person who ate his flesh.

Warfare increased greatly in all areas after the Europeans came. It became the main way of settling disputes between the Indians and the whites—two peoples who had widely different ways of life. The Europeans adopted the Indian style of warfare—ambush, surprise attack, and quick withdrawal. The Indians eagerly began to use the white man's guns and other weapons, which were much better than their own weapons.



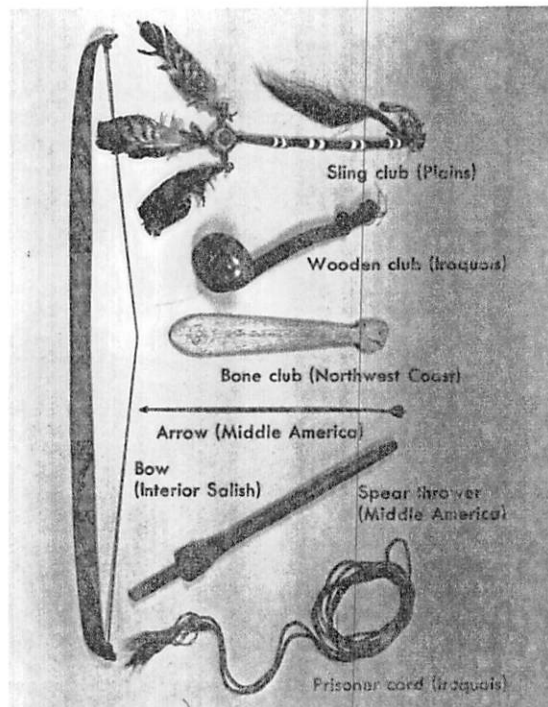
WORLD BOOK illustration by Anthony Sarris

Honor Feathers were awarded on the Plains for acts of bravery. Markings on the feathers identified the brave deed.



Field Museum of Natural History, Chicago (WORLD BOOK photo)

Shield Covers were often decorated with symbolic designs. The buckskin cover shown above belonged to a Crow chief named Big Bear. The shield itself was made of thick, dried buffalo hide.



Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto (special photo for WORLD BOOK)

Weapons were made mostly of wood and bone. This bow from the California-Intermountain area is 3 feet 8 inches (112 centimeters) long. The Iroquois club was an early form of tomahawk.